



# CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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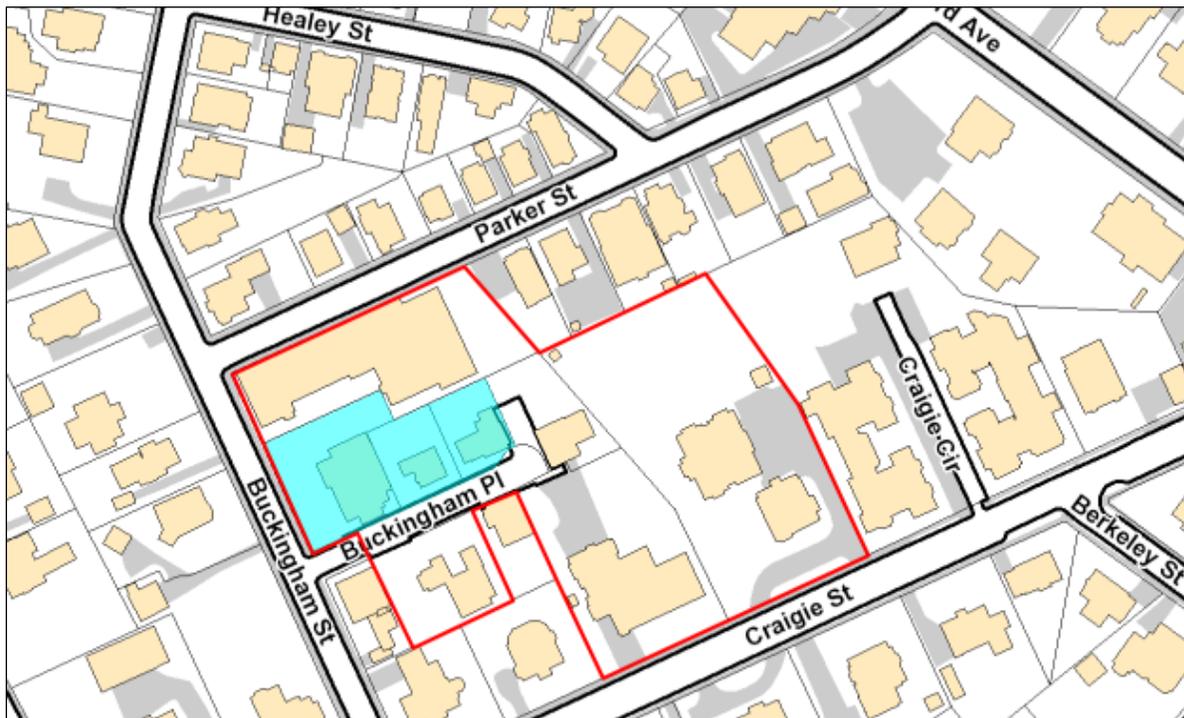
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Date: November 5, 2021  
To: Cambridge Historical Commission  
From: Sarah L. Burks, Preservation Planner  
Re: D-1597: 4 Buckingham Place (1892)  
D-1598: 6 Buckingham Place (1884, moved 1893)  
D-1599: 10 Buckingham Street (1892)

Applications to demolish three buildings on the Buckingham Browne & Nichols (BB&N) lower school campus was received on October 12, 2021. The school was notified of initial determinations of significance, and a public hearing was scheduled for November 10, 2021.

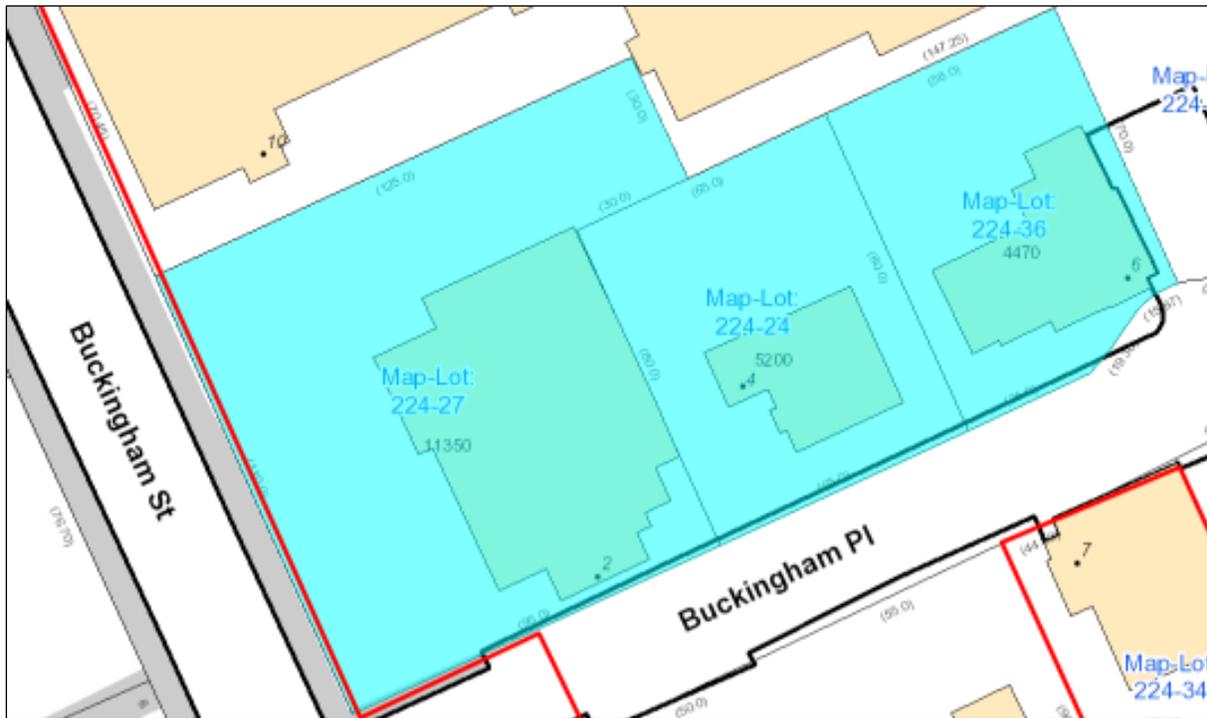


Assessor's Map, Cambridge GIS, 2021 (subject parcels in blue, BB&N campus within red lines)

## Location and Neighborhood Context

The three buildings are located on the north side of Buckingham Place at the corner of Buckingham Street. On the largest of the three lots (224-27, 11,350 sf) is the original Miss Markham's school building at 10 Buckingham Street (also called 2 Buckingham

Place). The Kelsey house sits on the middle lot (224-24, 5,200 sf) and the Morrison house is on the far right (224-36, 4,470 sf). The properties are located in a Residence A-2 zoning district. The combined assessed value of the land and buildings, according to the online assessor's property database, is \$5,412,000.



The three buildings are situated close to Buckingham Place, a short dead-end street on the east side of Buckingham Street. There are no accessory buildings but there is a play yard on the west front side of the Markham building.

BB&N has three campuses in Cambridge. The lower school is located here between Craigie, Buckingham, and Parker streets. The middle school is located on Sparks Street, and the upper school is at Gerry's Landing Road. The neighborhood that surrounds the lower school is made up primarily of single-family houses with the exception of a large apartment building at Craigie Circle and a few smaller apartment houses on Parker Street. The school recently acquired the house at 5 Buckingham Place, directly across the street from the Kelsey house. The two houses at 7 Buckingham Place and 4 Buckingham Street are privately owned and not part of the school.

The Percy Bridgman house at 10 Buckingham Place was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1975 for its associations with Percy Bridgman, a Nobel prize winning physicist who lived in the home between 1928-1961. BB&N proposed demolition of the ell in 1999 but changed its plans following a demolition review hearing with the Commission. It is not part of the current demolition proposal.

The current proposal is part of a larger master planning process for the school. The Markham building is proposed to be demolished and reconstructed closer to the corner of Buckingham Street on a smaller footprint and design resembling the original 1892 school. The other two buildings are proposed for demolition and the replacement structure would be a grassy play field to replace their current play field which will be the site of a future multi-purpose building. Plans have been filed with the applications.



Aerial view 27 March 2021. Nearmap.com accessed 5 Nov. 2021.



4 Buckingham Pl., Assessor's photo 2015

## Architectural Descriptions

The Thackray-Kelsey house at **4 Buckingham Place** is a 2½-story Queen Anne cottage built in 1892 as a single-family residence. The house measures 27 x 28 feet. The roof is steeply pitched and clad in copper. The roof extends down over the entrance porch, located on the west elevation. Three shallow shed dormers are located on the east side and one on the west. A brick chimney is located at the center of the house. The walls are clad in cedar shingles painted yellow. The second-floor projects about one foot over the first floor and rests on exposed beams. Under it, a three-sided bay occupies the left side of the street-facing elevation. A handicap ramp wraps the building on the south and west sides. The windows are a mixture of original and replacement sash but were originally a combination of two-over-two double-hung sash and diamond pane casements. There have been no additions to the original mass of this compact cottage.



4 Buckingham Pl., CHC staff photo, November 2021.

The Carey-Newell-Morrison house was built in 1884 as an art studio and moved to a new brick foundation at **6 Buckingham Place** in 1893 where it was converted for residential use. The chimney was relocated in 1897 and other unspecified interior modifications were made at that time. The roof is unusual with a gable form on one end and a hip roof with intersecting dormer on the other. A two-story addition was constructed on the north side in 1915. The walls are clad with cedar shingles and a square bay protrudes 2½ feet on the left of the front elevation. The cornice returns on the gable ends, but the house does not convey a strong sense of a specific architectural style.

The Markham school building at **10 Buckingham Street** started as a simple rectangular mass of 1½ stories with a covered entry porch, low hipped roof, projecting eaves, exposed rafter tails and a large combination chimney/belfry. It was designed by Andrews, Jaques & Co. architects. The building grew and changed organically as the school grew and educational needs changed. The present day building is an amalgamation of many additions around the central core of the original building.



West and south elevations of 6 Buckingham Pl. CHC staff photo, Nov. 2021.



South and east elevations of 6 Buckingham Pl. Two-story addition at right. CHC staff photo, Nov. 2021.



West and south elevations of the Markham building at 10 Buckingham St. CHC staff photo, Nov. 2021.



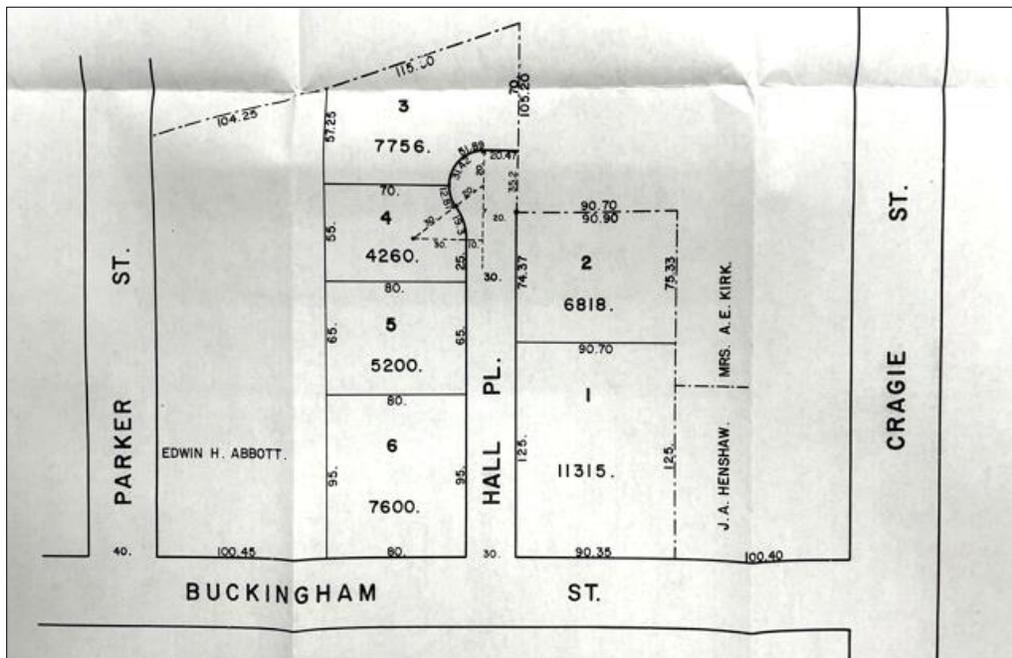
Perspective Sketch of Proposed School for Miss Markham. Andrews, Jacques & Rantoul architects, 1888.



Aerial view of the Markham building, 27 March 2021. From Nearmap.com, accessed 5 Nov. 2021.

### History

Once part of the Vassall-Craigie estate, Buckingham Street was laid out in 1856. Buckingham Place was a subdivision of the lands behind the home of Mrs. Elizabeth B. Tower at 4 Buckingham Street. Mrs. Tower was the widow of David B. Tower (1808-1868), a teacher and author of textbooks. Lots 4, 5 and 6 on this subdivision plan are subject of this memo.



1892 Subdivision plan of Lands of Mrs. D. B. Tower. W. A. Mason & Sons, Surveyors. Bk 76 Pg 2

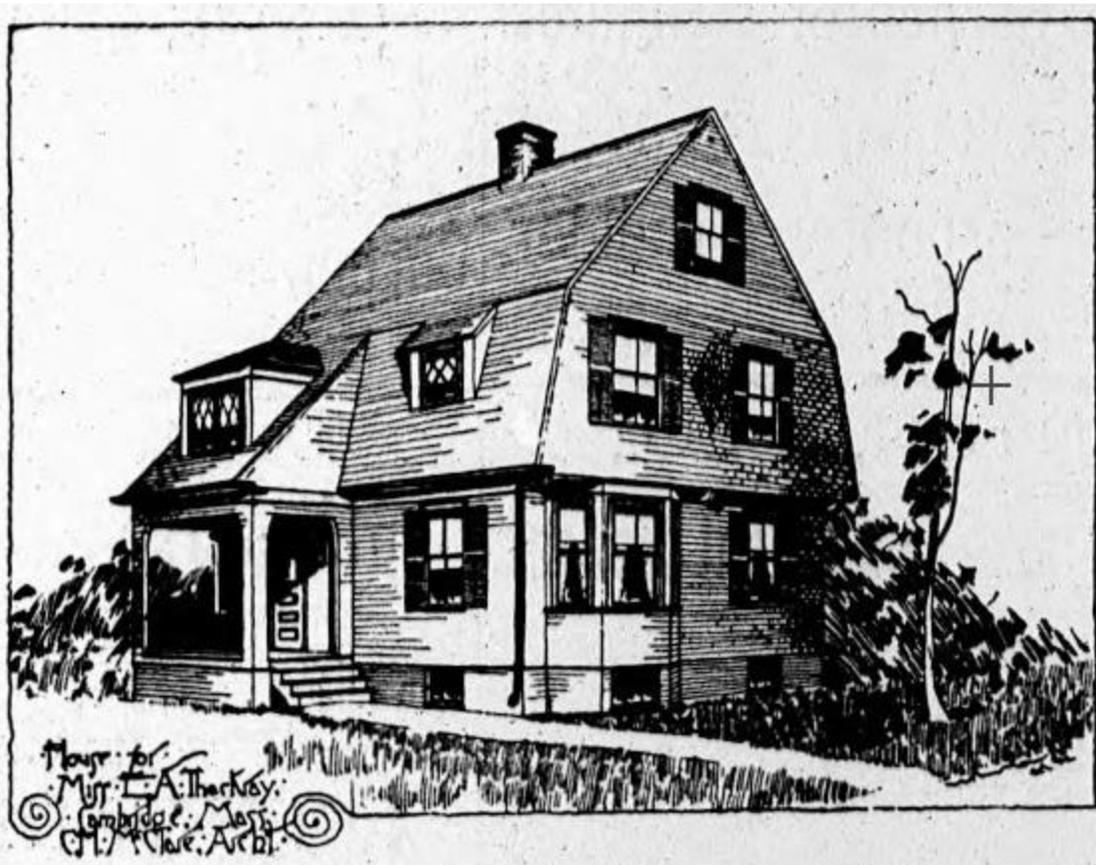
Jeannette S. Markham (1862-1932) of Atchison, Kansas heard about the higher educational opportunities for women in Cambridge through her local newspaper. She found her way to the Society for the Collegiate Instruction of Women (aka the Harvard Annex and future Radcliffe College) in 1886 with the local assistance of Miss Ellen F. Mason. Markham boarded with the family of Thomas Wentworth Higginson at 29 Buckingham Street. Her teaching career began with Higginson's daughter Margaret and grew to include other neighborhood children. Miss Markham started her school in a private home in 1889. The first building constructed for Miss Markham's School was financed by Edith Longfellow Dana on land that she purchased in 1890 at 10 Buckingham Street (2 Buckingham Place). The building was completed in 1892 and opened for classes that fall. It is now the oldest private school building in the city.

After ten years, Miss Markham left the school for married life. Married women were not allowed to continue teaching at that time. The parents and neighbors incorporated the school as the Buckingham School in 1892 and it remained in continuous operation. The Buckingham School merged with the Browne & Nichols School in 1974. The Markham building began as a 42 x 50-foot rectangular building with a large entrance porch facing Buckingham Place. The building was expanded in every direction over the years beginning with a 44 x 16-foot addition that was constructed in 1900. Additions to the footprint as well as construction of dormers and other alterations to the roofscape have ballooned the size of the original schoolhouse.

The school added to its campus in several phases, beginning with the construction of a brick Georgian Revival building at the corner of Parker Street in 1920. This was expanded in 1980 with an addition designed by Architectural Resources Cambridge. Another building was constructed at 19 Craigie Street in 1967 in a contemporary design by Ashly/Myer/Smith. A new science building was designed by Ann Beha Associates and built in 2001 behind the former St. Anne's Convent at 15 Craigie Street. This location was selected for the science center when the decision was made not to expand the Bridgman House for that purpose. The proposal for the Markham building is to rebuild it in a manner that is similar to the design of the original schoolhouse and move it closer to Buckingham Street.

Another teacher decided to make her home on Buckingham Place in 1892. Miss Emily Augusta Thackray (1835-1920) hired Cambridge architect Charles H. McClare to design her home. The house remains very similar to his original rendering pictured on the next page. Miss Thackray was a single woman of 57 at the time. She taught English, German and phonography (a form of stenography) at the Cambridge Evening High School for many years. She was of independent means and traveled for summer vacations to New Hampshire and Maine and for an extended stay in Italy in 1902-1904. In addition to teaching, she wrote poetry and sporting guides. She died in Brooklyn, NY in 1920.

The house was purchased by Edward Everett Kelsey, an organist, composer and teacher of piano at the Boston Conservatory of Music. His daughter was the violinist and violin instructor Miss Laura Kelsey. She married Dr. William Allen and they continued to reside at 4 Buckingham Place after her father's death. The house was purchased by the Buckingham School in 1929.



Arthur Astor Carey, Harvard graduate and patron of the arts, built the first Colonial Revival home in Cambridge at 28 Fayerweather Street in 1881. After graduating from Harvard he studied painting in Paris. He never had to make a living as an artist because he was one of the richest men in America but he did take a strong interest in fine arts and crafts, and would become the second President of the Boston Society of Art and Craft. He built an art studio at the back of his Fayerweather Street property in 1884. The studio and a portion of Carey's estate was purchased by William and Frances Newell of 175 Brattle Street in 1892. The Newells moved the studio to 6 Buckingham Place. Their son William and daughter Jane converted the building to a residence and lived there for many years.

Subsequent residents of 6 Buckingham Place were Prof. Theodore Morrison and Kathleen Johnston Morrison. Kathleen Johnston Morrison had worked as secretary and manager for Robert Frost for twenty-five years and published a biography of Frost in 1974. Theodore Morrison was a professor of English at Harvard, novelist and director of the Breadloaf Writers' Conference. The Morrison house was acquired by BB&N in 1975.

On the opposite side of the street, "The houses at 5, 7, and 10, designed in 1892-93 by William Griswold, a journalist and amateur architect who lived at 25 Craigie Street, led the *Tribune* to declare the street "an exceedingly pretty place" (Apr. 28, 1894). An important early Modern house designed by Carl Koch for his parents replaced the Buckingham house in 1937." (*Building Old Cambridge*, Ch. 4.)

### Significance and Recommendation

The buildings at 10 Buckingham Street and 4 and 6 Buckingham Place are significant for their important associations to the social history of Cambridge, specifically for their relationship to Jeanette Markham and the Buckingham School as well as to other educators Emily Thackray, Edward Kelsey and Laura Kelsey Allen and to the local philanthropist Arthur Astor Carey. 10 Buckinham Street and 4 Buckinham Place are also architecturally significant for their important associations with architects Andrews, Jacques & Rantoul and Charles H. McClare.

The school will present their proposal within the context of a campus wide master plan. BB&N hosted an informational meeting about the project for residents of the neighborhood last month.

cc: Ranjit Singanayagam, Inspectional Services  
Cynthia Westerman, BB&N